

STAKEHOLDERS' AWARENESS IN THE CONTEXT OF PREVALENCE OF AFLATOXIN IN MAIZE (*Zea Mays* L.) ALONG THE MAIZE VALUE CHAIN ACTORS IN URBAN AND PERI-URBAN AREAS OF MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of awareness and knowledge on the prevalence of aflatoxins among stakeholders along the maize value chain actors in urban and peri-urban areas of Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. A cross-sectional study design with mixed methods of sampling was employed whereby data were collected from a total of 164 respondents between August and September 2020. The study used a quantitative approach. Semi-structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews were used to obtain the data. Descriptive, inferential, methods were used for data analysis. Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used in this study. The population under this study included; processors, farmers, retailers, and consumers. The study did not do any laboratory testing. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The Chi-Square test of association was carried out to determine whether there was a significant association between categorical variables. The findings showed that there was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) in responses among stakeholders in knowledge and awareness of aflatoxin. There was also no difference ($p > 0.05$) in response to the occurrence of aflatoxin, factors influencing aflatoxin contamination, dangers of aflatoxin contamination, and awareness of aflatoxin effects on humans and animals. However, stakeholders differed in terms of the solution to aflatoxin contamination in maize ($p < 0.05$). Although aflatoxins were prevalent in the study area, the majority of respondents (63.42%) didn't know about the importance of proper storage. It was also found that molds are prevalent in all stages of the maize value chains. Some actors receive already affected maize. In some cases, the maize was affected during storage due to the type of storage practices. It is necessary to make concerted campaigns to create awareness among farmers, processors, retailers, and consumers about aflatoxin contamination in the maize value chain. The study further suggests that an adoption of pre-and post-harvest technologies together with awareness creation is still required to reduce aflatoxin contamination in the country.

Keywords: Aflatoxin, prevalence, awareness, knowledge, value chain actors, Tanzania.